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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 June 2005, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hunte ..... (St. Lucia)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

1. **The Chairman** said that the delegation of Peru had asked to participate in the meeting. If he heard no objection he would take it that the Committee wished to accede to that request.

Adoption of the agenda

2. *The agenda was adopted.*

Requests for hearing

3. **The Chairman** drew attention to two aides-memoires, dated 9 May 2005 and 10 May 2005 respectively, containing requests for hearings relating to the questions of Gibraltar and Western Sahara. He would take it that the Committee wished to accede to the requests.

4. *It was so decided.*

Dissemination of information on decolonization

5. **Mr. de Almeida e Silva** (Department of Public Information) said that, in its resolution 59/135, the General Assembly had given the Department of Public Information a mandate to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization and had requested the Department to take measures through all available media to publicize the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization. Accordingly, during the recent Caribbean Regional Seminar, the Department had deployed a press officer and a radio officer, and had issued five press releases and broadcast a number of radio interviews and features on the seminar. In addition, it had produced brochures on decolonization which had been distributed during the Committee's recent visit to Bermuda.

6. The Department's activities pertaining to decolonization continued to focus on coverage of the work of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, building partnerships with civil society through the network of United Nations information centres and strengthening the use of the Internet for the widest possible dissemination of information.

7. Recapping some of the pertinent information from the annual report, he said that during the reporting period the Department had issued over 40 press releases relevant to the work of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, including the special mission to Bermuda, which had been made available to a global audience through the United Nations website. The Radio Section continued to cover decolonization and related issues in its daily news programmes for regional and worldwide dissemination. Issues recently covered included the return of Vieques to the Puerto Rican people, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and the statement by the Secretary-General that colonialism was an anachronism in the twenty-first century. In addition, the Arabic Radio Unit had regularly covered issues concerning Western Sahara. Decolonization also formed an integral part of the guided tours conducted at United Nations Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna.

8. **Ms. Maldonado** (Department of Political Affairs) said that the Department of Political Affairs had been working in cooperation with the Department of Public Information to produce and disseminate material on decolonization. It collected information on decolonization from various sources, including from the administering Powers, media, Internet sites, participants in regional seminars and petitioners participating in meetings of the Special Committee.

9. Disseminating information to the Non-Self-Governing Territories remained a challenge. The Department used the occasion of the regional seminars to distribute material on decolonization to participants, and visiting missions to the Territories also provided an opportunity not only to gather information but to disseminate material on decolonization. A new brochure entitled "The United Nations and Decolonization: Questions and Answers", had been prepared in 2004 in response to the many queries received from individuals and organizations in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. An updated version of the brochure "The United Nations and Decolonization" had also been produced.

10. The special mission dispatched earlier that year to Bermuda at the request of the Bermuda Independence Commission and at the invitation of the Government, had included two DPA staff members. A series of meetings had been held with Government leaders, representatives of the administering Power, opposition members and a cross-section of Bermudan civil society, the main purpose being to provide the people of Bermuda with information on the role of the Special Committee, the General Assembly resolutions regarding self-government and assistance programmes. During the visit, the Secretariat had distributed copies

of the brochures, the Charter and the book "Basic Facts about the United Nations".

11. Since 2004, the Decolonization Unit had maintained its own website, which was continuously updated, and had also continued to provide up-to-date information to the DPI Public Inquiries Unit and Guided Tours Unit. The Department maintained a roster of individual experts, academics and organizations concerned with decolonization and the situation of the Territories, many of which had participated in the regional seminars conducted by the Special Committee. Nonetheless, during the recent Caribbean regional seminar, participants had reiterated the need for a public awareness campaign in the Territories.

12. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Cuba) said that the progress report on the dissemination of information on decolonization was encouraging, in particular the cooperation between the two Departments in radio features, preparation of seminars and the web page. He challenged them to expand further their cooperation in that area. His only regret was that no mention had been made of certain negative elements which had arisen.

13. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) said that his delegation also welcomed the cooperation of the two Departments in disseminating information and encouraged them to continue those efforts.

14. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) said that the Caribbean regional seminar had demonstrated the impact of good documentation, another reason to improve dissemination of information. During the mission to Bermuda, the people had reacted to the information they had received and had asked good questions, another indication of its importance.

15. **Mr. Fuenmayor** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) expressed his Government's unreserved commitment to support the sovereign will for self-determination in Western Sahara, adding that it hoped to see the Saharawi people achieve their independence as soon as possible and in a peaceful way.

16. He reiterated his Government's support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute involving the Malvinas Islands, and strongly rejected the inclusion of the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands in the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union signed on 29 December 2004.

17. He also endorsed self-determination of Puerto Rico, and supported the convening of an assembly on its status, where any solution to the political status of that island would be decided directly by the people of Puerto Rico.

18. **Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas** (Bolivia) stressed the need for greater emphasis on information on the promotion of the right to self-determination. It would also be interesting to hear what impact the information being disseminated by the Departments of Public Information and Political Affairs was having.

19. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) said that it was important to assess the way forward in the decolonization process. During the special mission to Bermuda and the regional seminar, he had observed the impact of the materials disseminated, and believed that further such efforts should be encouraged.

20. **Mr. Gregoire** (Dominica) agreed that dissemination of information on decolonization was very important, as the administering Powers had not provided Non-Self-Governing Territories with information, particularly regarding their self-determination options. The information provided in connection with the recent special mission to Bermuda had been an important contribution to the debate and had answered many of the questions of the people of Bermuda. The Committee's 2005 Caribbean Regional Seminar in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had also provided valuable insights into various issues facing Non-Self-Governing Territories. He therefore urged the Committee to continue organizing such seminars and special missions.

21. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/AC.109/2005/L.4 which he had prepared.

22. **Mr. Cherniavsky** (Secretary of the Committee) read out a number of revisions, which would be incorporated into the draft resolution.

23. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) proposed that paragraph 3 should also include a reference to the representatives of colonial Territories, as they played a key role in providing the Committee with information concerning the situation on the ground.

24. **The Chairman** said that the proposal had been noted. He suggested that, since he was still consulting with the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs and since changes might need to be made to reflect experience gained at

the recent seminar in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the special mission to Bermuda, the Committee should defer action on the draft resolution.

25. *It was so decided.*

Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (A/60/69, A/AC.109/2005/L.5)

26. **Ms. Maldonado** (Department of Political Affairs), said that, since issuance of the report, the United Kingdom had transmitted information for the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) for the year 2004. The information would be issued as an addendum.

27. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Cuba) said that the report seemed to contradict itself. Paragraph 3 stated that the annual reports of the Territories under the administration of New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States also included information on constitutional matters, and that supplementary information was also made available by those three Powers concerning Territories under their administration. According to the Annex, no information had been received from the United States in either 2004 or 2005.

28. **Ms. Maldonado** (Department of Political Affairs) explained that paragraph 3 referred to information that the administering Powers were required to transmit under Article 73 *e* of the Charter, while the Annex referred to information that had actually been transmitted.

29. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Cuba seemed to be proposing that the report should make a clear distinction between information that was required and information actually received. The special mission to Bermuda had revealed that no action whatsoever had been taken with regard to Article 73 *b* of the Charter. The fact that the administering Powers were not meeting their obligations needed to be reported. He would also like to see steps taken to formalize requirements in order to avoid the situation whereby some administering Powers argued that a resolution did not apply to them because they had not voted on it — as was the case with General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) — or that General Assembly resolutions were just recommendations. The report should state clearly what information was required and what information the administering Powers had thus far failed to transmit.

30. **Ms. Maldonado** (Department of Political Affairs) said that the drafters of the report had sought to do so. For example, the report referred not only to information required under Article 73 *e*, but also to information required under other relevant General Assembly resolutions, thereby covering information on constitutional developments, which were not required under the Charter. If the message was not clear, the necessary changes could be made to the next report.

31. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali), said that it was clear that New Zealand and the United Kingdom had made a significant effort to meet their requirements; they should therefore be commended and encouraged to continue their good work. Those administering Powers that had not met their requirements must be urged to work more closely with the Committee in implementing an essential provision of the Charter. He proposed that the report could simply specify that the information received from some of the administering Powers was insufficient.

32. **The Chairman** said that he had taken note of his proposal.

33. **Ms. Maldonado** (Department of Political Affairs), replying to a question from **Mr. Okio** (Congo) said that France was not mentioned in paragraph 3 because it had not consistently transmitted the information required under Article 73 *e*. However, in future France could indeed be included as one of the administering Powers required to transmit information under that Article.

34. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/AC.109/2005/L.5, which had been prepared by the Chairman. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

35. *It was so decided.*

Question of sending visiting missions to Territories (A/AC.109/2005/L.6)

36. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/AC.109/2005/L.6.

37. **Mr. Cherniavsky** (Secretary of the Committee) read out the following revisions to the draft resolution: in the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "and in the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism" should be added at the end and the word "and" after "1960" should be deleted; in the sixth preambular paragraph, "United

Nations" should be inserted before "special mission"; in paragraph 1, the words "and the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism" should be added at the end of the paragraph; in paragraph 3, the words "new approaches [...] in its efforts" should be replaced by "resuming formal cooperation with the Special Committee in furtherance of the decolonization mandate of the General Assembly"; and in paragraph 4, "as appropriate" should be replaced by "on the results of those consultations".

38. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/AC.109/2005/L.6, as orally revised.

39. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

40. **The Chairman** drew attention to an aide-memoire dated 8 May 2005 containing a request from the Representative for External Affairs of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands, Dr. Caylyle Corbin, that he be allowed to address the Committee and indicating his wish to have access to financial assistance for that purpose in accordance with the Guidelines for funding the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Committee at Headquarters (A/AC.109/L.1791, annex, and L.1804, para. 14). He took it that the Committee wished to approve the request with due regard for the provisions of the guidelines.

41. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.